



Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
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Springbrook Elementary School

WESTERLY

THE SALT VISIT TEAM REPORT

March 5, 2004



School Accountability for Learning and Teaching (SALT)

The school accountability program of the Rhode Island Department of Education

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Purpose and Limits of This Report

This is the report of the SALT team that visited Springbrook Elementary School from March 1-5, 2004.

This SALT Team wishes to acknowledge Stephanie Zeising and her committee of parents who provided wonderful home-cooked meals and treats during the visit.

The SALT visit report makes every effort to provide your school with a valid, specific picture of how well your students are learning. The report also portrays how the teaching in your school affects learning, and how the school supports learning and teaching. The purpose of developing this information is to help you make changes in teaching and the school that will improve the learning of your students. The report is valid because the team's inquiry is governed by a protocol that is carefully designed to make it possible for visit team members to make careful judgments using accurate evidence. The careful exercise of professional judgment makes the findings useful for school improvement because these judgments identify where the visit team thinks the school is doing well, and where it is doing less well.

The major questions the team addressed were:

How well do students learn at Springbrook Elementary School?

How well does the teaching at Springbrook Elementary School affect learning?

How well does Springbrook Elementary School support learning and teaching?

The following features of this visit are at the heart of the report:

Members of the visit team are primarily teachers and administrators from Rhode Island public schools. The majority of team members are teachers. The names and affiliations of the team members are listed at the end of the report.

The team sought to capture what makes this school work, or not work, as a public institution of learning. Each school is unique and the team has tried to capture what makes Springbrook Elementary School distinct.

The team did not compare this school to any other school.

When writing the report, the team deliberately chose words that it thought would best convey its message to the school, based on careful consideration of what it had learned about the school.

The team reached consensus on each conclusion, each recommendation, and each commendation in this report.

The team made its judgment explicit.

This report reflects only the week in the life of the school that was observed and considered by this team. The report is not based on what the school plans to do in the future or on what it has done in the past.

This school visit is supported by the Rhode Island Department of Education as a component of School Accountability for Learning and Teaching (SALT). To gain the full advantages of a peer visiting system, RIDE deliberately did not participate in the active editing of this SALT visit report. That was carried out by the team's Chair with the support of Catalpa. Ltd.

The team closely followed a rigorous protocol of inquiry that is rooted in Practice-based Inquiry™ (Catalpa Ltd). The detailed *Handbook for Chairs of the SALT School Visit* describes the theoretical constructs behind the SALT visit and stipulates the many details of the visit procedures. Contact Rick Richards at (401) 222-4600 x 2194 or ride0782@ride.ri.net for further information about the *Handbook* or other SALT protocols. The *Handbook* and other relevant documents are also available at www.Catalpa.org.

SALT visits undergo rigorous quality control. Catalpa Ltd. monitors each visit and determines whether the report can be endorsed. Endorsement assures the reader that the team and the school followed the visit protocol. It also assures that the conclusions and the report meet specified standards.

Sources of Evidence

The Sources of Evidence that this team used to support its conclusions are listed in the appendix.

The team spent a total of over 123 hours in direct classroom observation. Most of this time was spent in observing complete lessons or classes. Almost every classroom was visited at least once, and almost every teacher was observed more than once.

The full visit team built the conclusions, commendations, and recommendations presented here through intense and thorough discussion. The team met for a total of 32 hours in team meetings spanning the five days of the visit. This time does not include the time the team spent in classrooms, with teachers, and in meetings with students, parents, and school and district administrators.

The team did agree by consensus that every conclusion in this report is:

Important enough to include in the report

Supported by the evidence the team gathered during the visit

Set in the present, and

Contains the judgment of the team

Using the Report

This report is designed to have value to all audiences concerned with how Springbrook Elementary School can improve student learning. However, the most important audience is the school itself.

How your school improvement team reads and considers the report is the critical first step. RIDE will provide a SALT Fellow to lead a follow-up session with the school improvement team to help start the process. With support from the Westerly School District School Improvement Coordinator and from SALT fellows, the school improvement team should carefully decide what changes it wants to make in learning, teaching, and the school, and amend its School Improvement Plan to reflect these decisions.

The Westerly School District, RIDE and the public should consider what the report says or implies about how they can best support Springbrook Elementary School as it works to strengthen its performance.

Any reader of this report should consider the report as a whole. A reader who only looks at recommendations misses important information.

2. PROFILE OF SPRINGBROOK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Springbrook Elementary School is one of seven schools in the Westerly School District. Opening its doors in 1996, it serves students in pre-kindergarten through grade 5. There are two sessions of pre-school, two all-day kindergartens and three classes of each grade for grades one through five.

Of the 350 students, ninety-six percent are white, and fifteen percent are eligible for free or reduced-price breakfast and lunch. Forty-nine percent of pre-school classes are special needs students, and 51% are community models. Students in all grades, except pre-school, have two 40 minute blocks of physical education and one 40 minute block of art, music and library weekly.

Springbrook has one principal, 18 classroom teachers, eight teacher assistants and two resource teachers. The support staff includes one reading specialist, two therapists of speech and language, a math coach, an enrichment specialist, a school psychologist, a social worker and a diagnostic prescriptive planner. One art teacher, one physical education teacher and one music teacher provide instruction in the arts. One library/media teacher, one library aide and two nurse teachers, as well as three custodians, two food service people and five recess aides complete the staff.

As part of a Westerly School District initiative with the University of Pittsburgh, all of the principals in the district have been trained in the Principals of Learning, and they are members of the Rhode Island Consortium of the Institute For Learning (IFL). Teachers at Springbrook School are beginning to incorporate the Principles of Learning™ into their daily instruction, focusing on the principles of clear expectations™, accountable talk™ and academic rigor™.

All students who are performing below grade level in reading have a Personal Literacy Plan (PLP). Using district literacy assessments, teachers formally collect data on each of their students three times each year.

Many new initiatives are underway. In both the primary and intermediate grades, teachers instruct language arts using a four-block literacy model. In the primary grades, this four block method includes guided reading, self-selected reading, writing and working with words. The focus changes in the intermediate grades to more complex reading of various genres, in-depth studies of writing techniques, and instruction in decoding words using prefixes, suffixes and roots. Prior to its implementation, all teachers were trained in the use of this four-block model, as well as in the Balanced Literacy Framework designed by Connie Prevatte. *Kid-Writing* is a formal writing program used in kindergarten through first grade. Teachers use the *Empowering Writers* program in grades two to five. A few teachers work with a math coach to help students develop a deeper understanding of math concepts. They co-plan lessons, gather information and resources, teach lessons and look at student work to determine the effectiveness of their lessons. Other initiatives include the school-wide use of *thinking maps* (graphic organizers) and a sound field amplification system. These multi-method approaches address the various learning styles of students at Springbrook School.

Teachers at Springbrook School utilize a hands-on, kit-based approach to teaching science. Each teacher uses three kits each year and has received a minimum of two professional days to guide them in their science instruction.

Many clubs and before and after-school programs are available to students. These activities include Magical Writers, student council, “Early Bird” homework club, the Feinsein Newsletter club, a robotics club and a keyboarding club. Fourth and fifth grade students participate in a peer mediation program to help them develop positive conflict resolution skills. Fifth grade students work at the school store and act as safety patrols.

Community volunteers take an active role at Springbrook School. The Parent Teacher Organization meets monthly to strengthen the home-school connection. They sponsor many school-wide activities, purchase needed supplies and sponsor cultural events. Grandparents, parents, high school students, community volunteers and community helpers from The Olean Center assist at school events or act as helpers in the classrooms. The Springbrook School website is a source of classroom, school and PTO news and policies, as well as announcements of school awards and Feinsein news. Many teachers use the Internet to communicate with parents and to update them on recent events.

3. PORTRAIT OF SPRINGBROOK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT

Springbrook Elementary School is located in a secluded, rural neighborhood of Westerly, Rhode Island, near the Connecticut border. A bright colorful mural designed by a student lines the hall of the foyer. It is immediately apparent that Springbrook Elementary School is a friendly, welcoming place where students and teachers are valued. The front hall bustles with activity, as parents enter to volunteer in their children's classrooms and students move freely and confidently through the hallways. Parents, staff and students describe this school as a safe and caring place, where learning is important to everyone.

The teachers of Springbrook School are highly dedicated professionals. Many have worked together with their principal since the school opened eight years ago. They view her as their colleague and friend. She supports her teachers and shares similar philosophies and goals. As the current principal is retiring at the end of the school year, teachers anxiously await the appointment of a new principal in May. They are a faculty in transition, working to shift their instruction practices to meet the new demands for accountability that the state and a new principal will bring.

Springbrook has been categorized as a high performing school. However, based upon the data from the 2003 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries, its forward progress has stalled in the areas of problem solving and reading analysis and interpretation. A newly adopted district curriculum, coupled with the state assessment requirements, challenges teachers to change their instruction practices. Some embrace these changes, and others do not. Despite Springbrook's high test scores, continued improvement in student learning will require differentiation of instruction, a more focused, unified approach to the teaching of math and a greater emphasis on balanced literacy.

4. FINDINGS ON STUDENT LEARNING

Conclusions

Students at Springbrook School are confident writers and effective communicators, when writing narrative and expository pieces. They score very well on the state assessments in writing. More important, they believe they write well and clearly understand what to do to improve their writing. Their passion for writing is clearly evident. Throughout the school, students work diligently and proudly share their work with their peers. Students talk about what they write, using common and consistent vocabulary and building their understanding of the qualities of effective writing. They easily identify these elements in writing samples and can apply them to their own work. Students know how to use a wealth of resources, including charts from the *Empowering Writers* program, dictionaries, thesauruses, word walls and thinking maps to help them write independently. They also know how to use rubrics to critique and improve their work. However, when writing in the content areas, some students struggle to communicate their ideas clearly. They often write in short, choppy sentences, and their writing lacks supporting details. *(following students, observing classes, talking with students, teachers, school administrators, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing classroom assessments, 2003 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries, and 2003 Rhode Island Writing Assessment results)*

The majority of students are competent readers. They listen attentively to read alouds and talk about what they have heard. Students clearly understand how to choose appropriate books to read during their self-selected reading time. They effectively predict, use pictures, sound out words and use context clues to understand what they read. Students at all grade levels know how to use word families and spelling patterns to decode words and build new vocabulary. They know how to find the answers to recall questions, but many do not know how to use critical thinking skills to analyze and interpret text. Students do not consistently reflect on their reading or discuss text in small groups. Consequently, they miss opportunities to make personal connections to what they have read. Eighty-one percent of the students met or exceeded the standard in basic understanding on the 2003 New Standards Reference Examination, and sixty-three percent met or exceeded the standard in reading analysis and interpretation. While their test scores are high, students at Springbrook School score below similar students statewide in analysis and interpretation. *(following students, observing classes, talking with students, teachers, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, classroom assessments, 2003 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries and 2003 Information Works!)*

Students enjoy math and know how to connect math skills to their daily classroom routines. They know how to use manipulatives to explore different ways to represent numbers, to describe attributes of geometric figures and to explore the interrelationships of fractions, decimals and percents. Working with partners and in groups, students know how to work collaboratively in math centers, play math games and use computers to practice math skills and to apply math concepts. However, while most students know how to complete tasks, many often do not understand their purpose. This lack of understanding reduces the effectiveness of the activities. Students in only a few classrooms explore math concepts and show how to use strategies to solve problems. While many students say math is easy and want to be challenged more, others struggle to understand concepts and to explain their mathematical reasoning. Eighty percent of the students met or exceeded the standard in math skills on the 2003 New Standards Reference Examination, but only twenty-nine percent of the students met or exceeded the standard in problem solving. *(following students, observing classes, talking with students, meeting with students, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, and 2003 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries)*

Students at Springbrook School are friendly, respectful learners who are capable of more. They patiently listen throughout the day and are happy to be at school. Students consistently follow routines and respect their teachers. While some students say the difficulty of their work is “just right,” many are eager for greater challenges. The needs of individual students for support and challenge are met on a limited basis. *(following students, observing classes, talking with students, meeting with students, parents and district administrators, and 2003-2004 SALT Survey report)*

Important Thematic Findings in Student Learning

- ◆ *Students are attentive learners, who know how to use the available resources to help them learn.*
- ◆ *Students are confident writers and competent readers.*
- ◆ *All students are not equally challenged.*

5. FINDINGS ON TEACHING FOR LEARNING

Conclusions

Teachers at Springbrook School are excellent and knowledgeable writing instructors, who convey their passion for writing to their students. Teachers report that the success of their students is a direct result of “teaching the fundamentals of good writing prior to asking students to write.” Their sequential and consistent teaching practices provide a solid foundation from which students build to become successful writers. Using *Kid Writing* and the *Empowering Writers* programs, teachers provide time, resources and opportunities for students to peer and self-assess, as well as direct instruction on how to improve their work. As a result, students believe they are successful writers and are confident in their writing skills. However, teachers do not use some of these successful instruction strategies to teach writing in the content areas. While teachers provide adequate time for expository and narrative writing, they provide limited opportunities for students to write in other areas of the curriculum. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with the school improvement team, school administrator, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, talking with teachers and reviewing school improvement plan)*

Teachers teach reading by using a variety of instruction practices and resources. They are transitioning to a balanced literacy model and are just beginning to use this model effectively. While they gather a wealth of student assessment data throughout the year, teachers are just learning how to use this data to guide their instruction. Differentiated reading instruction is inconsistent. Some teachers conference with students during self-selected reading time to monitor their progress, but many do not, missing valuable opportunities to assess and guide individual students. In some classrooms, teachers teach small flexible groups based on students’ needs. But, the extensive use of whole group instruction limits opportunities for teachers to reach the needs of students performing at both the lower and higher levels. As a result, these students receive reading instruction and support outside of the regular education setting. *(following students, observing classes, talking with students and teachers, reviewing classroom assessments, completed and ongoing student work and classroom textbooks)*

Teachers struggle to implement effectively all of the components of the *Investigations* math program adopted by the district three years ago. They report that curriculum gaps exist. As a result, they use many supplemental materials to meet the needs of their students. While they say they need more professional development, teachers do not effectively use the available resources, such as the district math coach or the allocated in-service days, to strengthen their competencies in instruction. Not enough teachers provide sufficient opportunities for students to share their math reasoning, explore and develop math concepts or problem solve. Teachers do not share the same enthusiasm for the instruction of math as they do for the instruction of writing. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with the school improvement team, school and district administrators, talking with students, teachers, school and district administrators, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, classroom assessments and 2003 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries)*

Teachers at Springbrook School are a cohesive group of dedicated professionals, who genuinely care about their students. Students, families and district administrators commend the staff for their high level of commitment and generosity to the school community. Teachers regularly collaborate to discuss learning and teaching. As a result, continuity of instruction and terminology exist school-wide in some areas of the curriculum. While staff members continue to grow together to become expert teachers of writing, they are fragmented in their implementation of the current district math program. As a result, their math instruction is less effective. *(following students, observing classes, talking with students, teachers, parents, school and district administrators, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, 2004 SALT Survey report)*

Commendations for Springbrook Elementary School

Dedicated, hard working professionals

Cohesive staff

Expert teachers of writing

Recommendations for Springbrook Elementary School

Increase the use of data to guide reading and math instruction.

Utilize the math coach more effectively to develop teacher expertise in math instruction. Take advantage of district professional development hours allocated for collaborative time with the math coach.

Broaden the use of common planning time to develop consistent expectations and instruction practices in math and balanced literacy.

Provide more opportunities to differentiate instruction within the classroom. Increase participation in professional development activities.

Develop high expectations for all students and increase academic rigor.

Recommendations for the Westerly School District

Continue to provide professional development for the differentiation of instruction.

Provide continual support and encouragement for the effective use of the math coach.

6. FINDINGS ON SCHOOL SUPPORT FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING

Conclusions

The principal of Springbrook School is a supportive leader, who is accessible to parents, students and teachers. Parents say that her approachable demeanor encourages them to take an active role in the school. Teachers trust and respect her and view her as a friend, as well as a colleague. Her frequent visits to classrooms keep her closely connected to the teaching and learning happening there and help her know her students by name. Her leadership style of shared decision-making creates a cohesive climate. She gives her teachers the confidence that they will continue to grow as professionals after she retires. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team, students, parents and district administrators, talking with students, teachers, parents and 2004 SALT Survey report)*

The ability level of students determines their classroom placements in the first and second grade and their groupings for math instruction in third and fifth grades. As a result, students in some classrooms do not receive the same rigorous instruction as students in other classrooms. Placement of students in homogenous groupings decreases the need for teachers to differentiate their instruction within their classrooms. While students report that they receive help, when they are pulled out of their regular education settings, they also say that they struggle to complete their regular classroom assignments successfully after they return. Teachers report the need for more professional development to increase their ability to differentiate within their own classrooms. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with students, school administrator and talking with students, teachers, parents, school and district administrators)*

The school improvement plan, as written, does not include the components that are needed to move the school forward in teaching and learning. Action plans do not clearly describe the changes in instruction that are needed to accomplish their targets. While test data indicates the need to improve math concepts and problem solving, no action plan addresses this need. The guidelines for periodic monitoring are not specific enough to determine whether students are developing the proficiencies identified to improve learning. While several components of an effective plan are present, the plan, as written, is not an effective agent for change. *(meeting with the school improvement team, 2003 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries and reviewing school improvement plan)*

Parents and community volunteers are an integral part of the school community and help bridge the connection between home and school. They volunteer in the library and help in the classrooms. They fund and support many activities to enhance student learning including the book fair, a monthly newsletter and field trips. The PTO sponsored after-school programs, such as robotics, karate and nature studies, which address the interests of students outside of the classroom. Parents use the information board and the school website to access information about school and classroom activities. They report that regular communication with the school helps them support and guide their student learners at home. *(observing classes, observing the school outside the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team and parents, talking with students, teachers, parents, school administrator, reviewing school improvement plan, reviewing district strategic plan, and 2004 SALT Survey report)*

Commendations for Springbrook Elementary School

Supportive leadership

Strong parental involvement

Effective home-school communications

Recommendations for Springbrook Elementary School

Continue to support professional development activities in the differentiation of instruction.

Revise the school improvement plan to include clear, specific action steps and a monitoring process. Use a collection of data to inform the process.

Re-examine the student placement process and ability groupings to determine the effect on student learning. Increase differentiation of instruction within the regular education setting.

Increase academic rigor for all students.

Recommendations for the Westerly School District

Provide leadership support for the new principal.

Provide continued professional development in the differentiation of instruction. Increase support for job-embedded professional development to model effective teaching practices.

7. FINAL ADVICE TO SPRINGBROOK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The SALT team wishes to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the principal, staff and students of Springbrook School. You have created a welcoming and nurturing environment, where students can learn and grow. The pride you and your students have in Springbrook is evident throughout the school.

Use your cohesiveness as a staff to support one another as you continue to grow and develop as teachers. If you embrace math instruction with the same enthusiasm and passion that you have for writing, your students will only benefit. Utilize the numerous resources and teacher experts that are available to increase your effectiveness as teachers. Continued training in differentiated instruction will increase your capacity to meet the challenges of helping all students learn well.

While you enjoy the reputation of a high performing, sustaining school, there is still work you need to do. Capitalize upon the opportunities that will be provided by new leadership to challenge yourselves as professionals to improve your instruction for the benefit of all students.

The SALT team would like to wish your principal well, as she begins her retirement. She has provided you with the leadership skills to move forward. Use the conclusions and recommendations in this report to guide your next steps.

ENDORSEMENT OF SALT VISIT TEAM REPORT

Springbrook Elementary School

March 5, 2004

Catalpa Ltd. monitors all SALT visits and examines each SALT visit team report to determine whether it should be endorsed as a legitimate SALT report. The endorsement decision is based on procedures and criteria specified in *Endorsing SALT Visit Team Reports*. (available on Catalpa website). Catalpa Ltd. bases its judgment about the legitimacy of a report on these three questions:

Did the SALT visit team and the host school conduct the visit in a manner that is reasonably consistent with the protocol for the visit?

Do the conclusions of the report meet the tests for conclusions specified in the visit protocol (important, accurate, set in present, shows the team's judgment)?

Does the report meet the tests for a report as specified in the visit protocol (fair, useful, and persuasive of productive action)?

Using the answers to these questions, the final decision to endorse the report answers the overall endorsement question: Is this a legitimate SALT team visit report? In order to make this determination, Catalpa weighs all the questions and issues that have been raised to decide whether a report is legitimate or not. While it is possible that a challenge related to one of the three questions listed above would be serious enough to withhold or condition the endorsement, it is more likely that issues serious enough to challenge a report's legitimacy will cut across the three questions.

While the SALT visit protocol requires that all SALT visits are conducted to an exceptionally high standard of rigor, visits are "real-life" events; it is impossible to control for all unexpected circumstances that might arise. The protocol for the conduct of the visit is spelled out in the *Handbook for SALT Visit Chairs, 1st edition*.

Since unexpected circumstances might result in either the team or the school straying too far from the protocol for a visit, Catalpa monitors both the school and the team during a visit regarding the conduct of the visit.

Most often actual visit events or issues do not challenge a report's legitimacy and Catalpa's monitoring and endorsement is routine. A district administrator, principal, faculty member or parent may not like a report, or think it is too negative, or think the visit should have been conducted in a manner that is not consistent with the protocol. None of these represent a challenge to a report's legitimacy; concerns that might challenge an endorsement are based on events that stray too far from the protocol.

The steps Catalpa completed for this review were:

- discussion with the chair about any issues related to the visit before it began
- daily discussion of any issues with the visit chair during the visit
- observation of a portion of the visit
- discussion with the principal regarding any concerns about the visit at the time of the visit
- thorough review of the report in both its pre-release and final version form

The findings from the review are:

1. This team was certified to meet team membership requirements by RIDE staff.
2. is report was produced by a legitimate SALT Visit that was led by a trained SALT Visit Chair and conducted in a manner that is consistent with SALT Visit procedures.
3. The conclusions are legitimate SALT visit conclusions.
4. The report is a legitimate SALT visit report.

Accordingly, Catalpa Ltd. endorses this report.



Thomas A. Wilson, EdD
Catalpa Ltd.
March 23, 2004

REPORT APPENDIX

Sources of Evidence for This Report

In order to write this report the team examined test scores, student work, and other documents related to this school. The school improvement plan for Springbrook Elementary School was the touchstone document for the team. No matter how informative documents may be, however, there is no substitute for being at the school while it is in session—in the classrooms, in the lunchroom, and in the hallways. The team built its conclusions primarily from information about what the students, staff, and administrators think and do during their day. Thus, this visit allowed the team to build informed judgments about the teaching, learning, and support that actually takes place at Springbrook Elementary School.

The visit team collected its evidence from the following sources of evidence:

- ◆ *direct classroom observation*
- ◆ *observing the school outside of the classroom*
- ◆ *following 7 students for a full day*
- ◆ *observing the work of teachers and staff for a full day*
- ◆ *meeting at scheduled times with the following groups:*
 - teachers*
 - school improvement team*
 - school and district administrators*
 - students*
 - parents*
- ◆ *talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators*
- ◆ *reviewing completed and ongoing student work*
- ◆ *interviewing teachers about the work of their students*
- ◆ *analyzing state assessment results as reported in Information Works!*
- ◆ *reviewing the following documents:*
 - district and school policies and practices*
 - records of professional development activities*
 - classroom assessments*
 - school improvement plan for Springbrook Elementary School*
 - district strategic plan*
 - 2003 SALT Survey report*
 - classroom textbooks*
 - 2003 Information Works!*
 - 2003 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries*
 - 2003 Rhode Island Writing Assessment results*
 - School and District Report Cards*

Springbrook Elementary School Reading Curriculum
After School Program and Library Communication
News and Communication
Springbrook Elementary School Writing Curriculum
Springbrook Elementary School Math Curriculum
Westerly Public Schools 2003-2004 Strategic Plan
The Principles of Learning in Action: Instructional Leadership Program,
Summer 2002, January 2003
The Institute for Learning: Structuring rigorous professional development to
build nested learning communities, October, 2002
Empowering Writers: Narrative Writing Books 1-6
Westerly Public Schools K-5 Classroom Reading Assessments
Westerly Coaching Notebook
Standards-based Report Cards
Teacher Evaluation Documents
Contract between the Westerly School Committee and the Westerly
Teachers' Association NEARI/NEA September 1, 2003-August 31, 2006
Westerly Public Schools Student Expectation Handbook 2003-2004
District Crisis Guidelines
Proposed Westerly School District Budget for 2004

State Assessment Results for Springbrook Elementary School

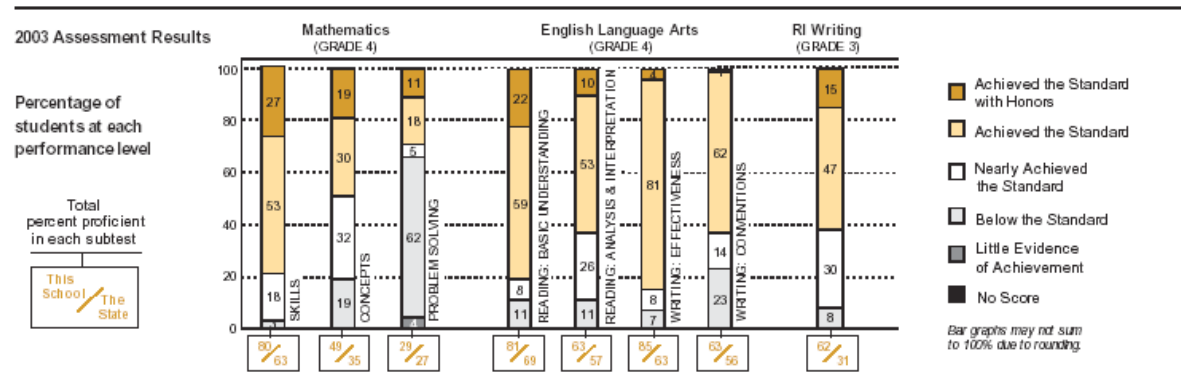
Assessment results create pieces of evidence that the visit team uses as it conducts its inquiry. The team uses this evidence to shape its efforts to locate critical issues for the school. It also uses this evidence, along with other evidence, to draw conclusions about those issues.

This school's results are from the latest available state assessment information. It is presented here in four different ways:

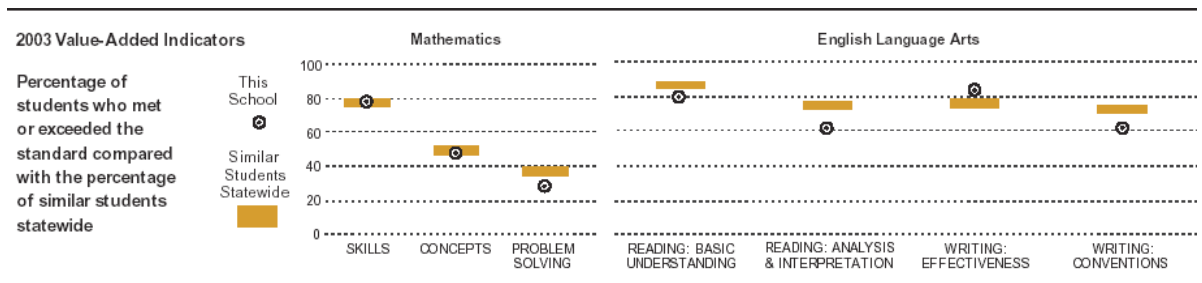
- ◆ *against performance standards;*
- ◆ *compared to similar students in the state;*
- ◆ *across student groups within the school;*
- ◆ *and over time.*

RESULTS IN RELATION TO PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

The first display shows how well the students do in relation to standards in English/Language Arts and mathematics. Student results are shown as the percentage of students taking the test whose score places them in the various categories at, above, or below the performance standard. Endorsed by the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education in 1998, the tested standards can be found in the publication New Standards Performance Standards.

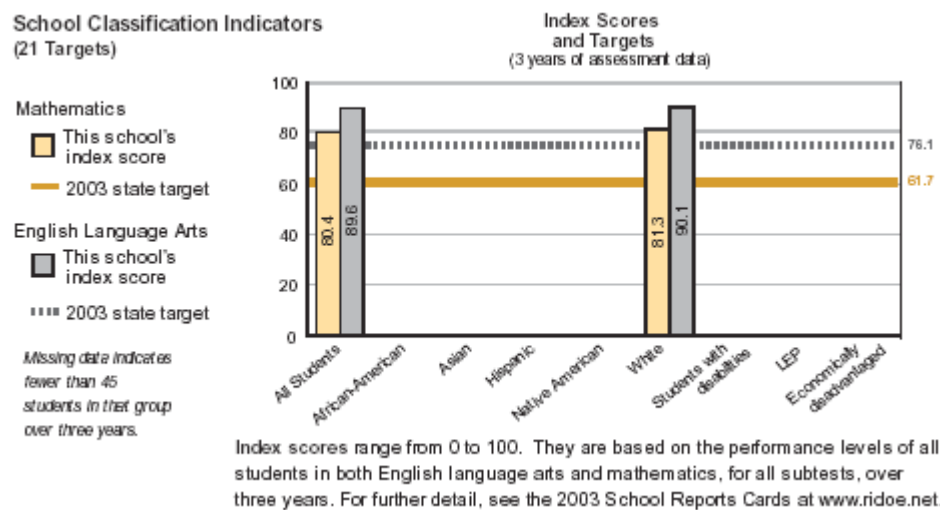
TABLE 1. 2002-03 STUDENT RESULTS ON RHODE ISLAND STATE ASSESSMENTS RESULTS

This chart includes the performance levels of students with special education needs, students participating in ESL or bilingual programs, low socio-economic status (a composite of income level, racial background and parental education), as well as the performance of students with none of these characteristics. Taking all these characteristics into account, the graph displays the overall performance of students in this school compared to - a group of students from across the state whose characteristics match this school's students.

Table 2. 2001-2002 Student Results in Comparison to Similar Students Statewide

RESULTS ACROSS STUDENT GROUPS WITHIN THE SCHOOL

An important way to display student results is across different groups of students with different characteristics who are in the school. This display creates information about how well the school meets the learning needs of its various students. Since breaking students into these smaller groups can result in groups becoming too small to show accurate results, this display shows the results based on three years of testing. The Department defines an important gap between different groups (an equity gap) to be a gap of 15% or more.

Table 3 2001-2002 Student Results across Subgroups

RESULTS OVER TIME

Now that the state assessment program has been functioning for five years, it is possible to show results over meaningful periods of time. This display shows changes in the percentage of students at or above standard and the percentage of students in the lowest performance categories. These displays correspond to the targets the Department of Education asked schools to set four years ago and are the basis for the department categorizing schools as improving or non-improving.

The Springbrook Elementary School has been categorized as a high performing, sustaining school on the basis of its assessment results from 1998 to 2002. The following tables show if the school improved or not in each area that defines improvement (*Yes* denotes improvement and *No* denotes no improvement.)

Table 4. 2003 Student Results Showing Change Over Time

The Springbrook Elementary School has been categorized as a high performing, sustaining school on the basis of its assessment results from 2000 to 2003. The following is the school report card that shows the schools performance in relation to the 2004 annual measurable objectives. (AMO)

Information Works! data for Springbrook Elementary School is available at <http://www.ridoe.net>.

THE SPRINGBROOK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT TEAM

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Principal

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Grade 1 Teacher

Brenda Palmer
Parent

Lisa Portofee
Parent/PTO President

Florence Savas
Grade 3 Teacher

Margaret Stewart
School Committee Chairwoman

Joan Strickland
Grade 4 Teacher

Stephanie Zeising
Parent

MEMBERS OF THE SALT VISIT TEAM

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To serve as SALT Fellow
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